

PANHANDLE REGIONAL VETERAN TREATMENT COURT

POLICIES



CODE OF CONDUCT

- I** I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.
- II** I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.
- III** If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.
- IV** If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any act which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am secured, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.
- V** When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements derogatory to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.
- VI** I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

PROCEDURES

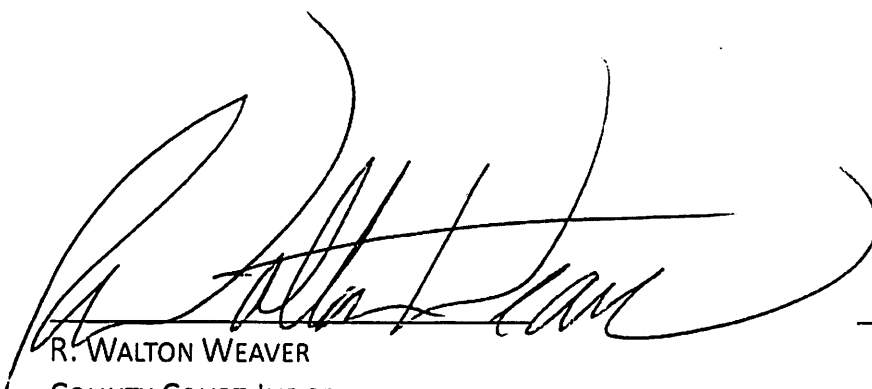


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM HISTORY	PAGE 3
STEERING COMMITTEE	PAGE 3
MISSION	PAGE 3
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	PAGE 4
PROGRAM STRUCTURE	PAGE 5
TARGET POPULATION	PAGE 5
ELIGIBILITY, EXCLUSIONS, AND RECONSIDERATION	PAGE 6
ENTRY PROCESS	PAGE 7
TEAM MEMBER ROLES	PAGE 8
PHASE STRUCTURE AND COMMENCEMENT CRITERIA	PAGE 11
GRADUATION CRITERIA	PAGE 13
TERMINATION CRITERIA	PAGE 13
INCENTIVE AND SANCTION	PAGE 13
TREATMENT PROTOCOL	PAGE 15
SUPERVISION PROTOCOL	PAGE 15
DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROTOCOL	PAGE 15
STAFFING PROTOCOL	PAGE 16
CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOL	PAGE 16
PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	PAGE 17
DISPARATE IMPACT STATEMENT	PAGE 20
DOCUMENTATION	PAGE 20
DATA REPORTING	PAGE 20
EVALUATION DESIGN	PAGE 20
FEES AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT	PAGE 21
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ANCILLARY SERVICES	PAGE 21
MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING	PAGE 21
APPENDIX	PAGE 21

THIS IS THE POLICY MANUAL OF THE VETERAN TREATMENT COURT. IT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND DISCUSSED.
I APPROVE THIS MANUAL AND WILL BE USED AS THE GUIDELINES OF THIS COURT.



R. WALTON WEAVER
COUNTY COURT JUDGE
POTTER COUNTY COURTS BUILDING

14 June 21
DATE

PROGRAM HISTORY

In early 2016, the 47th District Attorney's Office and the Amarillo VA Health Care System teamed up to do a District Attorney's diversion program addressing Potter County Veteran's felony charges. In June 2016, the first Veteran entered the program. From 2016 through 2018 – the program would accept only three Veterans at a time to be able to create a structure for the program and create a staffing framework to move forward. In 2017, one Veteran graduated and in 2018, two Veterans graduated. In late 2018, Potter County chose to help the program expand by adding a program coordinator. The program received its first grant from the Texas Veterans Commission, which allowed the program to assist Veterans needing transportation help for treatment. Three Veterans graduated in 2019. During 2019, the program began to admit more Veterans including those with cases from the Potter County Attorney's Office (misdemeanors) and from Randall County (misdemeanors and felonies). In 2020, six Veterans graduated and by the end of 2020 – there were 14 Veterans in the program.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Judge Walt Weaver, Potter County Court at Law #1

Jason Howell, Assistant 47th District Attorney's Office

Adrian Castillo, Assistant 47th District Attorney's Office

Denise Hefley, Diversion Program Coordinator Specialty Court Office, County Court Commissioners

Brothy Carskadon, LCSW Veteran Justice Outreach, Amarillo VA Health Care System

Greg Dement, Potter County Probation Dept.

Cassandra Maes, Potter County Probation Dept.

Richard Bernal, Deputy Director, Potter County Probation Dept.

Avis Morris, Court Coordinator Potter County Court at Law #1

L. Van Williamson, Attorney at Law

Cole Combs, Attorney at Law

Verlene Dickson, Director, Veteran Resource Center, Family Support Services

Chess Grant, Counselor, Another Chance House

Anne Blanscet, LMSW Another Chance House

Perry Gilmore, PhD, Director, Panhandle War Memorial

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Panhandle Regional Veterans Treatment Court is to promote justice through a judicially managed alternative to incarceration for justice involved service members. Building upon the core values instilled in our veterans, we provide structure and treatment to assist in becoming more productive citizens.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the Veteran Treatment Court include:

- 1) Improving coordination and access to needed mental health and addictions treatment for Justice Involved Veterans;
- 2) Resolving felony and misdemeanor charges which are primarily related to mental health, mild or moderate TBI and addiction issues;
- 3) Improving long-term mental health recovery and community reintegration through involvement in structured, comprehensive treatment;
- 4) Reducing drug use, criminal activity and criminal recidivism through treatment and judicial oversight; and
- 5) Reducing tax payer costs associated with incarceration the criminal justice system.
- 6) Better protect victims and the community with the rehabilitation of the justice involved Veteran.

Methods For Achieving Goals

Goal 1 - Improving coordination and access to needed mental health and addictions treatment

- Mandate intensive substance abuse treatment as needed, close judicial supervision, and mentoring of all participants with appropriate sanctions and rewards based on performance. Close judicial supervision is premised upon a stable and consistent relationship between the participant and the designated Veteran Treatment Court Judge.

Goal 2 – Resolving felony and misdemeanor charges

- Following recognized evidence based methods and procedures to address criminal charges, which have been empirically shown to reduce recidivism.
- Using evidence based therapies to address mental health and substance use issues insures healthier coping mechanisms.

Goal 3 - Improving long-term mental health recovery and community reintegration

- Holding justice involved Veterans accountable through monitoring of their attendance in therapy, doing regular drug screens, weekly case management and regular court appearances.
- Impose immediate sanctions for non-compliance, including minor violations.
- Discharge participants who commit serious violations or repeatedly commit minor violations.

Goal 4 - Reducing drug use, criminal activity and criminal recidivism

- Mandate intensive and comprehensive treatment that directly address Veterans charges.
- Provide referrals and incentives to other social services.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for volunteerism, job training, and employment.

Goal 5 - Reducing tax payer costs

- When Veterans are out of jail on bond, this costs the taxpayers less money than housing them.
- When Veterans are using available resources for counseling, this is appropriate use of those services and saving the taxpayers money.

- When Veterans are using federal resources, the community is using available money that is being funded by the federal government.
- When Veterans reintegrate into the community appropriately and do not reoffend, they have saved the community the cost of years of prison time.
- When a Veteran gets a job or volunteers, the community directly benefits from that.
- When the Veteran no longer offends – the family and community directly benefit.

Goal 6 - Better protect victims and the community

- Mandating evidence based therapy to better ensure Veterans learn healthy coping skills.
- Mandating extended protective orders for victims as determined by a court process.
- Offering couples counseling for Veterans who plan to remain with their significant other, as deemed necessary.
- Promoting volunteerism, job training, and employment counseling.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Potter County Veterans Treatment Court will include pre-plea, post-plea, pre-adjudication and probation violation cases. For justice involved veterans who meet the criteria for Veterans Treatment Court with more serious offenses participation can also be ordered as an initial condition of supervision at sentencing.

TARGET POPULATION

Target Population is all justice involved Veterans including current members of the United States Armed Forces, a member of the Reserves, National Guard, or State Guard suffering from a diagnosable and treatable behavioral health issue.

- For Veterans using the Amarillo VA Health Care System and other Federal VA resources, they must meet the VA eligibility requirements.
- For Veterans not eligible for the VA – the Veteran Resource Center or other community resources will assist them in accessing resources.
- Veterans Treatment Court will target high risk / high need to moderate need felony and misdemeanor offenses, and/or other participants as determined.
- The court will accept Veterans from other Courts when requested and if agreed upon by all parties.

ELIGIBILITY, EXCLUSIONS, AND RECONSIDERATION CRITERIA

guided by Texas Government Code 124, the justice involved Veteran must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Veteran or active duty service member, National Guard member, State Guard member, or Reserve member having served in the U.S. Military.
- Have pending eligible felony or misdemeanor offense.
- Be a legal resident of/or citizen of the United States of America.
- Have behavioral health issue, mild or moderate TBI, and/or substance use diagnoses
- Be eligible for VA services or identified community services.
- Have treatment accessible to address the diagnoses.
- The defendant must complete the application packet and sign all required Veterans Treatment Court and VHA releases of information.

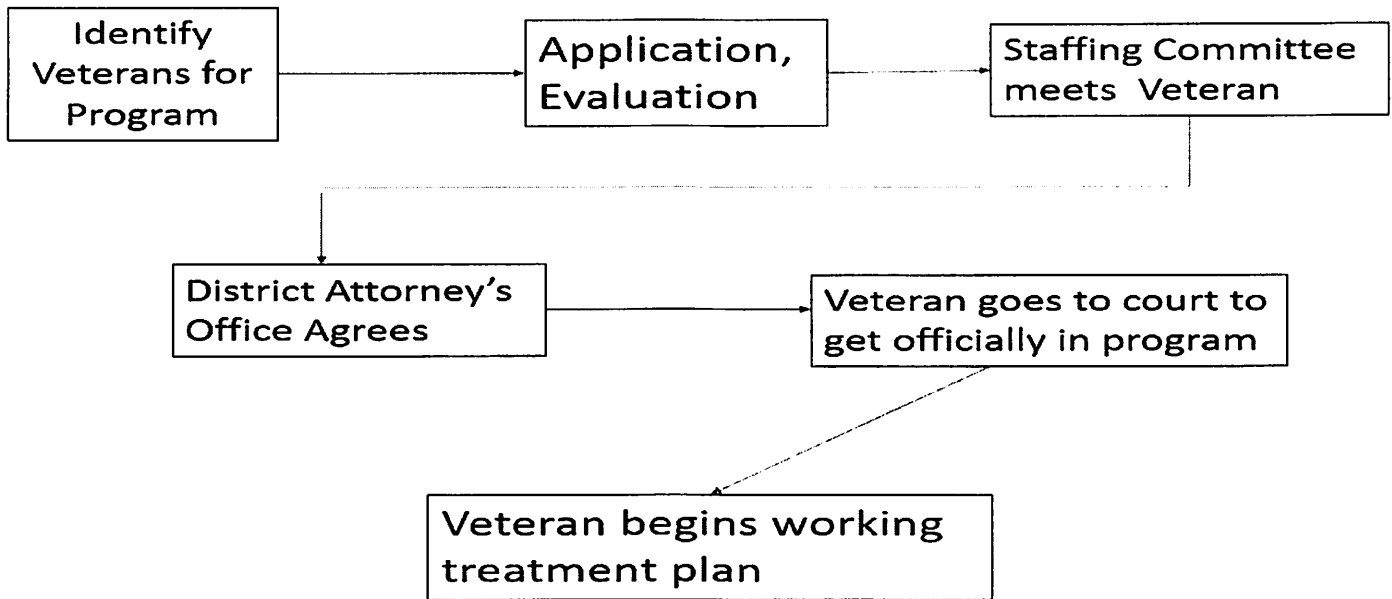
Exclusions

- Is seriously and persistently mentally ill and cannot participate
- Has previously been terminated or graduated from Veterans' Court
- District/County Attorney specifically excludes Veteran from participation

Reconsideration By Veterans Treatment Court Staffing Committee

- If a relevant party to the offender's case (attorney, judge, treatment provider, police officer, etc.) believes the Veterans Treatment Court staffing committee failed to consider a particularly important factor, he/she may fill out a request for the case to be reconsidered and submit it to the Veterans Treatment Court coordinator.
- Case reconsideration may be filed using the form found in appendix one time and must be within 30 days of initial rejection.
- The request must include supportive reasoning for reconsideration; this is defined as mitigating circumstances pertaining to the crime, psychiatric/psychological reports that may not have been available for initial consideration, or any other relevant information that can be placed in written format. Once the request for reconsideration is submitted, the Veterans Treatment Court coordinator will forward the information to the state prosecutor (Assistant District Attorney).

Entry Process



Veteran is identified for program by anyone who believes that a person is a Veteran and may be eligible for the program. The Veteran Justice Outreach will verify military service and reach out to the Trial Defense Attorney and Program Coordinator alerting them of this option.

2. Application and Evaluation – Applications can be found on the Potter County website or request through the Program Coordinator. All applications for admission must be submitted by Defense counsel to the Diversion Program Coordinator Specialty Court Office at DeniseHefley@co.potter.tx.us. The latest that the application can be received is 60 days after discovery is filed. Program Coordinator Specialty Court Office will inform the Veteran Justice Outreach will schedule a VA evaluation. If Veteran is not eligible for VA, then Veteran Resource Center will assist with scheduling through Texas Panhandle Center. Veteran is welcomed and encouraged to start exploring treatment options at this time.

3. Staffing Committee meets Veteran: The Veteran will meet with the Staffing Committee. Veteran will watch Veteran Staffing Meeting to observe process. After the date of presentation, the committee will make decision and inform the trial defense lawyer and the Veteran.

4. Prosecuting Attorney's Office Agrees to use Veteran Treatment Court for offense: Veteran's Trial Defense Attorney makes a plea deal with the Prosecuting Attorney to use the Veteran Treatment Court as alternative prosecution. Veteran's Trial Defense Attorney thoroughly explains program to Veteran. Veteran signs plea deal paperwork.

5. Veteran goes to Court to get officially in program – Phase 1: Veteran go trial court and requests transfer to the Veteran Treatment Court.

. Veteran begins working agreed upon treatment plan: Veteran will immediately start all aspects of the treatment plan.

Team Member Roles/Ethical Considerations

The VTC has established a Team comprised of members representing the collaborative agencies. Sharing information between the Team members is vital to the VTC program. The Team will meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and resolutions. In creating this partnership and uniting in a single goal of addressing our community, the Team pledges to enhance communication between the courts, law enforcement, and other treatment programs. Through this linkage of services, we expect wider participation and greater effectiveness in addressing our Veteran population with drug, alcohol, and/or mental health issues that are involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Presiding Judge

The Presiding Judge leads the treatment team. The Judge advocates for the law. He presides over staffings and court sessions. He regularly reviews participants personal progress and treatment progress. He leads all team meetings and is the final arbiter in any decision. The Judge directs other team members to collect information, coordinate services and monitor compliance. He approves all admissions to the PRVTC. During all court status reviews, the Judge discusses progress and issues of non-compliance with each participant, administers sanctions and incentives as appropriate. The Judge determines when the Veteran has met all requirements for progression and to graduate. On those occasions where the Veteran does not meet legal requirements and lacks motivation or capability to do so, the Judge will discharge the Veteran from the program. The Judge attends and coordinates trainings that focus on mental health, addiction, recovery, relapse prevention, etc. for themselves and the team. They represent the PRVTC in the community, government, criminal justice agencies, and other public forums

The Presiding Judge is not your case manager, personal attorney, or your legal advisor.

Court Coordinator

The Court Coordinator administrates for the Judge and will assist the Judge in getting information to Veteran Treatment Staffing Team. The Court Coordinator schedules and organizes each Veterans Treatment Court meeting. Provides information to potential program participants. Organizes all documentation for the court process. Collaborates with other members of the staffing committee to ensure that we all have the same information. Coordinate dissemination of court agenda.

The Court Coordinator does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager, mentor, or legal advisor.

Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator assists with preparing the docket for the VTC. The Program Coordinator advocates for the Judge. The Program Coordinator is the liaison between the Judge and other team members facilitating communication and coordination between the team. The Program Coordinator will track Veterans progress through the program. They must have treatment knowledge to review intakes and to perform initial review of all applications for completeness. They will route the application to the appropriate parties for approval. They will conduct an initial interview with each candidate to provide an overview of the program. The Program Coordinator maintains records, MOU's, program statistics, and data collection. They create and update policies and procedures. Research grant opportunities, write grant proposals, and oversee grant conditions in the program. The Program Coordinator will work with the Judge to promote the program to the community and be the administrator of all donations for the program. The Program Coordinator understands the continuum of treatment issues and works toward insuring that evidence based treatment and manualized treatment are available for all Veterans in the program. Researches, advises court staff, and attends available training from a variety of sources. The Program Coordinator will research appropriate training opportunities and disseminate them to the VTC team.

The Coordinator does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager, mentor, or legal advisor.

Assistant District Attorney

The Assistant District Attorney reviews cases for prosecution. The Assistant District Attorney advocates for the Victims and the Community. They take in all new cases in order to determine eligibility and appropriate placement. The eligibility assessment includes a review of the candidate's criminal history, consultation with victims, legal eligibility and appropriate dispositions upon the candidate's entry into Veterans Treatment Court. This includes creating any needed protective orders and ensuring that the Veteran through their lawyer is aware of them. The Assistant District Attorney files all court documents. They monitor all Veterans progress through the program recommending sanctions or incentives with the community safety foremost in their mind. The Assistant District Attorney monitors participant progress and should a participant be re-arrested, the Assistant District Attorney assesses the appropriateness of continued participation in Veterans Treatment Court.

The District Attorney does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager, mentor or legal advisor.

County Attorney

The County Attorney reviews cases for prosecution. The County Attorney advocates for Victims and the Community. The County Attorney reviews any potential misdemeanor cases for potential eligibility and appropriate placement. They allow the Veteran to have their cases transitioned to the Veteran Treatment Court. They are welcome to attend to monitor the process in the PRVTC, especially when they have a Veteran in the program. They will be invited periodically to assess the progress of the Veteran in the program.

The County Attorney does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager, mentor or legal advisor.

Trial Defense Counsel

The Trial Defense Attorney is the identified court appointed or retained attorney of record for the case. The Trial Defense Counsel advocates for the Veteran. This is the initial Defense Attorney who will prepare the application and will maintain the representation of their client throughout the Panhandle Regional Veteran Treatment Court until the court case is complete. If the Veteran is discharged from the program back to the standard court process, the Trial Defense Counsel takes the case. They are welcome to attend to monitor the process in the PRVTC, especially when they have a Veteran in the program. At graduation, the Trial Defense Counsel will do any court processes needed to close the case (ie. Expungement). They will be invited periodically to assess the progress of the Veteran in the program.

The Trial Defense Attorney does not fill the role of Program Defense Counsel (ie. Does not represent all the Veterans, just their client), personal counselor, case manager or mentor.

Program Defense Counsel

The Defense Attorney advises the candidate and is mindful of the candidate's constitutional rights as a criminal defendant and the defendant's civil rights. The Program Defense Attorney advocates for the Veteran. The Defense Attorney will be at each court session to ensure the Veterans rights are protected during the PRVTC program.. They will provide legal advice and coaching as appropriate to deal with unforeseen legal issues that may arise during the Veteran's time in the PRVTC. They seek to find treatment solutions for the defendant that minimize the defendant's exposure to incarceration, reduce the risk of re-arrest or new charges, and mitigate the consequence of a criminal conviction.

The Program Defense Attorney does not fill the role of Trial Defense Attorney, personal counselor, case manager or mentor.

Community Supervision Officer (Probation Officer)

The Supervision Officer (SUPO) monitors all Veterans in the PRVTC. The Supervision Officer advocates for the Judge. The SUPO monitors all case plans and reports all court compliance. The SUPO supervises participants through frequent office visits, periodic home visits, random searches, and administers frequent and random drug testing. The SUPO participates in each staffing session, prepares progress reports to update the Treatment Team on each participant, and recommends appropriate sanctions and incentives. Using the available software, update the Veterans progress through the program.

The Probation Officer does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager, mentor or legal advisor.

Veteran Justice Outreach

The Veteran Justice Outreach works for the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist Justice Involved Veterans. The VJO advocates for the Veteran. A Veteran is identified and referred to the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO). The VJO ensures that the Veteran's HIPPA rights are protected through releases of information. The VJO will determine military service – dates of service, character of service, and era of service to include any deployments for combat. For Veterans that are eligible for the VA – the VJO will ensure that the Veteran is informed about VA services, the PRVTC, and treatment recommendations. The VJO will ensure that the Veteran gets the evaluation and treatment plan completed for the PRVTC. The VJO will provide direct assistance to the Veteran to obtain counseling, benefits, and medical appointments. The VJO will report the Veteran's compliance to treatment to the Program Manager and to the Court Staff as a whole. They will recommend and often coordinate additional individual supports as needed. They will identify potential gaps in the social service system that need to be addressed and liaison with other service organizations to address them. They will participate in all PRVTC proceedings to provide input on the Veterans treatment progress and suggests appropriate sanctions and incentives based on treatment issues.

The Case Manager does not fill the role of personal counselor, mentor, or legal advisor.

VSO Court Liaison (Veteran Resource Center)

The VSO Court Liaison will work with Veterans not eligible for the VA Health Care System. The VSO Court Liaison advocates for the Veteran. They will ensure that the Veteran gets the evaluation completed. They will ensure that they get a treatment plan. They will guide them to treatment, monitors the Veteran's progress in treatment and services received, recommends and often coordinates additional individual supports as needed, and suggest appropriate sanctions and incentives based on treatment issues. The VSO Court Liaison will provide a Peer Support Group for all Veterans in Program to enhance group cohesion.

The Case Manager does not fill the role of personal counselor, mentor, or legal advisor.

Peer Mentor Coordinator (Military and Veteran Peer Network)

The Peer Mentor Coordinator will manage the mentoring component of Veterans Treatment Court. The Peer Mentor Coordinator advocates for the Veterans. They will seek out new mentors, ensure they are qualified, and designate each program participant a mentor. They will monitor the mentors and invite them to the PRVTC as appropriate.

The Peer Mentor does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager or legal advisor.

Veteran Benefits Representatives (Veteran Resource Center)

The Veteran Benefits Representative is a Benefits Expert. The Veterans Benefits Representative advocates for the Veteran. Central to the success of the veterans' court is the ability to assist veterans in connecting with a wide variety of veterans' benefits. Many veterans may need VA pensions/incomes reinstated, may need to enroll in VA educational and vocational programming, and may need to have their military discharge status updated.

The VBA Representatives do not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager or legal advisor.

Community Representatives (such as Another Chance House, etc.)

The Veteran Service Organization Representative is from an organization that is currently providing significant help to the Veteran. They advocate for the Veteran. Whether the services are housing, case management, food, or other essentials to move from a position of survival to a position of thriving. The VSO Representative is often in an excellent position to explain how the Veteran is managing tasks of daily living. The VSO is in an excellent position to encourage counseling, making of medical and mental health appointments, and exploring work options.

The Community Representatives do not fill the role of legal advisor.

Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement Staff are often part of the Crisis Intervention Team of the police force. Law Enforcement advocates for the District Attorney. Law Enforcement assists the treatment team in the diversion of defendants from the detention facility to a more appropriate placement in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The Law Enforcement staff acts as a liaison between the detention facility and the Veterans Court treatment team. The staff person participates in discussions of the best approach to management of the participant while in the facility, to expedite release when possible and to reduce recidivism.

The Law Enforcement Officer does not fill the role of personal counselor, case manager or legal advisor.

NOTE: Each Team member is responsible for disseminating information from their respective agency with regard to confidentiality laws that apply specifically to the VTC participants.

PHASE STRUCTURE AND COMMENCEMENT CRITERIA

The program is divided into three phases and the expected duration of the program is between 12 to 24 months. Each phase has a particular focus; treatment and program compliance is required for advancement to the next phase.

Phase I Orientation/ Stabilization: During this phase the Veteran is introduced to the court process and works to demonstrate stability in targeted areas – court attendance, treatment compliance, stabilization in life, and sobriety.

Focus: Introduction to Court/ Stabilization / Intervention & Early Recovery

- Court requirements: The Veteran shall appear in court weekly for at least the first month of participation.
- Treatment requirements: At least one month of regular attendance and full participation in any and all treatment plan and counseling sessions as well as compliance with recommended medications is required.
- Supervision requirements: The Veteran shall meet with the supervision officer once a month outside of court, or as directed. Unannounced home visits may be conducted at any time. Any changes in contact information shall be reported to the supervision officer. And other supervision requirements as needed.
- Support requirements: The Veteran will identify assets and obstacles to developing and maintaining stability (specifically with regard to employment, education, housing and relationships) and consult with specialists for assistance as needed. The Veteran will present as fully stable in their lives for at least one month.
- Drug testing and abstinence requirements: The Veteran shall do a weekly drug screen at the VA and/or submit to urinalysis and/or breath analysis tests as directed by the random call-in system or as directed by any program team member. They must have at least one month of negative drug screens to advance to Phase II.

To advance to Phase II the Veteran will fill out the request promotion to Phase II found in appendix prior to court date that asks how they have successfully addressed the various above requirements and can articulate future goals as they move forward.

Phase II Treatment & Recovery: During this phase the Veteran is in active recovery through participation in treatment, working with the probation office, negative drug screens, and presenting to court to discuss progress.

Focus: Active Recovery & Relapse Prevention

- Court requirements: The Veteran shall appear in court every first and third Mondays of the month or as directed by the Judge.
- Treatment requirements: The Veteran shall attend and be actively engaged in all recommended treatment (individual and group counseling sessions) and make progress toward specific treatment goals. The Veteran will maintain compliance with the medication regimen. Demonstrate active participation for at least 60 days.
- Supervision requirements: The Veteran shall meet with the supervision officer once a month outside of court, or as directed. Unannounced home visits may be conducted at any time. Reporting any changes in contact information and making requests to leave the service area for any reason for at least 60 days. And other supervision requirements as needed.
- Support requirements: The Veteran will demonstrate sustained effort to obtain stable housing as well as pursuing educational and employment opportunities as needed and appropriate. The Veteran will engage family members or friends in his or her treatment and recovery process. Demonstrate stabilization for at least 60 days by personal report to the court.
- Drug testing and abstinence requirements: The Veteran shall submit to urinalysis and/or breath analysis tests as directed by the random call-in system or as directed by any program team member. Have negative drug screens for at least 60 days.

To advance to Phase III the Veteran will submit the request for promotion to phase III found in appendix prior to court date of transition that demonstrates that they have been focused on active recovery, they have been stable in their life, and have not relapsed during this time.

Phase III Reintegration

Focus: Continuing Care: This is the longest phase of the program – the demonstration that life has changed. Participating actively in treatment, including working to focus treatment on future goals. Demonstrating ongoing stability and enjoyment in life by discussing at court positive changes that have occurred. And continuing with negative drug screens demonstrating that there has not been a relapse in their life.

- Court requirements: The Veteran shall appear in court on the first Monday of every month or during a Monday court time if they request a treatment plan change within the month or as directed by the Judge.
- Treatment requirements: The Veteran shall attend and be actively engaged in all recommended treatment for at least 120 days (individual and group counseling sessions) and demonstrate accountability and insight with regard to problem behaviors. The Veteran will maintain compliance with the medication regimen for at least 120 days.
- Supervision requirements: The Veteran shall meet with the supervision officer once a month outside of court, or as directed. Unannounced home visits may be conducted at any time. Report any contact information changes. Make appropriate requests to the probation office if leaving service area at all. Maintaining good communication with probation officer for at least 120 days.
- Support requirements: The Veteran will demonstrate sustained effort to obtain stable housing as well as pursuing educational and employment opportunities as needed and appropriate for at least 120 days. The Veteran will engage family members or friends in his or her treatment and recovery process for at least 120 days.
- Drug testing and abstinence requirements: The Veteran shall submit to urinalysis and/or breath analysis tests as directed by the random call-in system or as directed by any program team member for at least 120 days.

To graduate from the program the Veteran will request to graduate demonstrating that they have completed all the requirements of the program using the form found in appendix. This request will focus on what they feel they have

achieved in the program starting with where they started and their challenges that they overcame. They will also be able to discuss what they see as a future direction for themselves.

GRADUATION CRITERIA

The VTC goal is to successfully graduate all Veterans. A Veteran is considered ready for graduation after completing a full year of the program and they have successfully completed all phases, met all treatment and program, and made the request to graduate. The VTC team will review the request found in appendix and make recommendations to the Judge. The ultimate decision for graduation is made by the Judge. Most graduations will be planned for the first Monday of each month so that all their Veteran peers are present. Veteran must be present in Court to graduate. The Graduation Ceremony is a time to celebrate the individual achievements and successes of each Veteran. This celebration allows Veterans in earlier phases to become encouraged and motivated by watching the hard work and dedication of each Veteran to successfully complete the program.

TERMINATION CRITERIA

The goal of the Veteran Treatment Court is to have all participants that are accepted into the program to graduate the program. However, this lofty goal is not always possible.

- First, this is a voluntary program, so a Veteran may choose to opt out for their own reasons. The Judge requires that the Veteran will meet with their Trial Defense Counsel to inform their lawyer of the voluntary decision to leave the VTC. This insures that the Veteran has discussed the matter with their lawyer and understands all the legal options and consequences.
- Secondly, this is a phased treatment program. The Judge will use incentives, sanctions, inpatient treatment, and extension in the program to help the Veteran successfully graduate. If the Veteran for mental health, cognitive, or emotional reasons is unable to be compliant with the treatment options, does not maintain sobriety, is unable to move forward to the next phase, or continues to go back phases despite being extended in the program, the Judge may have no other option but to discharge the Veteran back to the standard court system.
 - Prior to that happening, the Judge will give several warnings and order the Veteran to speak to their Program Defense Counsel about their legal options prior to being discharged.
 - As stated above, our goal is to give the Veteran every opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to do the steps needed to graduate, however, we will discharge a Veteran who is unable to do this.

INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

Incentives

One way the Court will support the Veteran is by providing a series of rewards (incentives) to encourage and reinforce progress. Incentives may be received for excellent participation, clean holiday time, a new job, college attendance, driver's license reinstatement, etc. Incentives are given to recognize the personal and therapeutic successes the Veteran has achieved in the VTC program.

- Verbal recognition/praise from the Judge
- Round of applause in Court

- Decreased supervision
- Travel privileges
- Permission to attend AA/NA supported outings
- Veteran Service Organization supported outings
- Awards/Certificates
- Permission to remove or decrease use of monitoring device
- Gift Cards
- Phase promotion
- Any other incentive deemed appropriate for the participant's positive actions
- Dismissal and possible expunction of your case if you successfully complete the program, and entered the VTC as part of a pre-trial diversion program.

Sanctions

If the Veteran violates the VTC program rules and requirements or fails to achieve phase requirements, they will be held accountable using form found in appendix . Using sanctions for failing to follow the expectations that they have agreed to meet will help the Veteran remember their responsibility and accountability to themselves and the VTC. Possible violations include, but are not limited to:

- missed or late arrival to Court,
- supervision appointments,
- treatment sessions,
- failed or altered urine tests,
- drug and/or alcohol use,
- device tampering,
- failure or refusal to take prescribed medications,
- and new arrests/charges.

Sanctions are typically progressive and become stiffer for repeat violations. In higher phases, the expectation is that the Veteran has demonstrated a higher level of accountability and will not need any sanctions as a reminder. However, there may be cases that a sanction is imposed, which may be stiffer than for lower phases due to the higher level of responsibility that they had gained in the program.

Sanctions are individualized to your situation and should not be compared against sanctions given to other Veterans. Remembering that sanctions must be fair and equitable means that the participants would recognize the level of sanction is fair in relationship to the Veteran's phase, capability, and responsibility. It is important to remember that any sanction given by the Judge is designed to help the Veteran correct behaviors that are considered high risk, to help them progress through the stages of change, and to assist them in successfully completing the program.

- Verbal admonishment/reprimand from the Judge
- Increased supervision
- Increased drug testing/electronic monitoring
- Written assignments
- Community service hours – preferably at a Veteran Service Organization like the Panhandle Museum, Veteran Resource Center, VFW, American Legion. However other organizations such as, Salvation Army, Downtown Women's Center, a Food Pantry or a Church would also be considered based on the Veteran's needs and desires.
- Increased community restrictions
- Delay in promotion to next phase
- Demotion to previous phase
- Jail commitment to remind the Veteran that this is how they got into this program through violations
- Veterans Accessing Lifelong Opportunities for Rehabilitation (VALOR)
- Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility (SAFPF)

- Intermediate Sanction Facility (ISF) for Cognitive or Substance Use
- GPS, SCRAM or breathalyzer for vehicle can be ordered
- Any other sanction appropriate for the participant's actions, or lack thereof.
- Discharge from VTC (see Discharge Section)

TREATMENT PROTOCOL

The VTC is a focused treatment court.

- Every Veteran will have a treatment plan to use throughout their entire time in the program.
 - All Veterans in the program will have a written copy of their current treatment plan that they bring to court with them to help them maintain focus.
 - The VJO, VSO Liaison and Program Manager will keep the Veteran's current plan easily accessible, so if the Veteran does not have it, they can request one.
- Every Veteran will participate in, at a minimum, three sessions of counseling per week (ie. Mental Health, Substance Use, Peer Counseling, Compensated Work Therapy, Equine Assisted Therapy, Housing First, etc.).

The VTC is a phased program.

- Every Veteran will have the opportunity to get stabilized in their counseling through weekly engagement with the VTC team to help them understand the requirements and adjust emotionally and mentally.
- As each Veteran participates and adjusts to each phase requirements of the program, they can request to be phased up through completing a written request using forms found in the appendix.

The VTC focuses on success.

- Every Veteran will have the opportunity for success.
- The treatment will be focused on evidenced-based treatment protocols.
- The expectations and phases will be clearly set.
- The Judge will use incentives to commend progress with a Veteran.
 - The Judge will use compassion when a Veteran struggles in the program and after working at adjustments and alterations in the treatment protocol, will begin to use sanctions and extension to the program to assist the Veteran in adjusting their course to ensure the best opportunity for success.

SUPERVISION PROTOCOL

The Potter, Randall, & Armstrong County Community Supervision and Correction Department (CSCD) will provide a Probation Office to monitor the court compliance requirements of all Veterans for the court.

- Veterans are not to leave the designated Potter, Randall, Armstrong County areas without a travel request from the Probation Officer. The Veteran is responsible for talking with the Probation Officer in advance to request the travel pass.
- Veterans will inform the Probation Officer of their address, phone number, and email for easy contact when needed. If any contact information changes, the Veteran will inform the Probation Officer.
- Veterans will create a respectful relationship with the Probation Officer.
- The Probation Officer will ensure that random drug and alcohol screens are performed as needed.
- The Probation Officer will monitor housing, financial status, and other treatment court requirements.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROTOCOL

The VTC requires weekly drug screens on all participants. The Probation Office can take random drug and alcohol screens as they believe is warranted. The Veteran will be charged for each drug screen done by the CSCD. Those participants living at Another Chance House will have drug and alcohol screens as designated by that program. The Amarillo VA Health Care System will do weekly screens on Veterans eligible for VHA. The Veteran will need to see the

VJO to have the screens ordered and monthly thereafter to remind the VJO to order more drug screens throughout the program. If a drug screen is positive at the Amarillo VA Health Care System, a confirmatory test will be performed to determine the source of the positive testing unless confirmed positive by the Veteran.

STAFFING/STATUS HEARINGS

The VTC will have weekly staffings held in Judge Weaver's court. The Judge will lead the team and be the final arbiter on all issues. The VTC Team will meet before the Veterans arrive to discuss each Veteran's progress, any incentive or sanctions, the next graduation, and any administrative business such as changes in policy or handbook, grant proposals or status, community outreach and funding opportunities, or training opportunities, etc.

The Court Coordinator will keep the VTC team informed of any staffing and/or scheduling changes such as time, place, Judge, etc. The VJO/ VSO Liaison will discuss the progress of the Veterans. The Program Coordinator will address any administrative business. The Probation Officer will discuss any compliance concerns with the Veterans.

The Veterans will attend staffing based on their phases. Phase I will be every Monday. Phase II will be the first and third Mondays of the month. Phase III will come on the first Monday of the month. With all Veterans attending the first Monday of each Month, this will also be the Graduation date for the program so that all participants can attend. Any changes of court dates due to holidays or other issues will be announced at court or emailed to all participants in advance. The Program Coordinator, Court Coordinator, or VJO can be called for any questions about court dates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All VTC participant records are protected by federal and state laws regarding confidentiality. The VTC cannot release written or verbal information without the Veterans' written, signed consent. However, a Veteran cannot participate in VTC without a "Release of Information" which allows the VTC Team to discuss the case and progress. Team members sign confidentiality statements and are bound by such. Persons outside the VTC Team will not be provided information about the Veteran or their progress unless there is an emergency or legal circumstance that requires release of information, such as:

- The disclosure is allowed by a court order or for an audit.
- The disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency.
- The participant commits or threatens to commit a crime.
- The participant is suspected of child abuse or elder abuse.
- The participant is threatening suicide or homicide.

Anything a Veteran says concerning their prior or current drug use while in the VTC program cannot be used against them in prosecution of the offense for which they entered the VTC program. However, their statements and information about their treatment will be shared with the VTC Team. This information may be used to evaluate their current compliance with the program and to determine appropriate treatment or other actions.

The VTC may use data for research purposes that will not contain any personally identifiable information so that grants, donations, and other funds can be requested and obtained to continue this court and for other statistical needs.

The VTC honors the confidentiality of all Veterans and will require all staff members, Veterans, guests, and any other member in the courtroom during staffing will sign a one-time agreement of confidentiality found in

appendix that will be maintained for two years after the individual leaves or by signed date for one time guests by the Court Coordinator.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Participant Bill of Rights

1. The Veterans have the right to accept or refuse participation after receiving this explanation.
2. If the Veterans agree to treatment, the Veteran has the right to change their mind at any time (unless
3. specifically restricted by law).
4. The Veterans have the right not to be discriminated against due to race, creed, color, national origin, sex or physical disability.
5. The have the right to a humane environment that provides reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy for your personal needs.
6. The Veterans have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
7. The Veterans have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
8. The Veterans have the right to appropriate treatment in the least restrictive setting available that meets their needs.
9. The Veterans have the right to be told about the program's rules and regulations before they are admitted to the program.
10. The Veterans have the right to a treatment plan designed to meet their needs, and they have the right to take part in developing that plan.
11. The Veterans have the right to meet with staff to review and update the plan on a regular basis.
12. The Veterans have the right to have information about them kept private and to be told about the times when the information can be released without their permission.
13. The Veterans have the right to receive an explanation of their treatment or their rights if you have questions while they are in the Veterans Treatment Court Program.
14. The Veterans have the right to make a complaint and receive a fair response from the program within a reasonable amount of time.
15. The Veterans have the right to get a copy of these rights before they are admitted into this program.
16. The Veterans have the right to have their rights explained to them in simple terms, in a way they can understand, upon request.

If the Veteran feels that their rights have been violated or they have been treated unfairly, they have the right to file a grievance

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504 AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for enforcing the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, involving health care and human service providers and institutions.

What Is Prohibited Under Section 504 and the ADA?

Both Section 504 and the ADA prohibit covered entities from discriminating against persons with disabilities in the provision of benefits or services or the conduct of programs or activities on the basis of their disability. Section 504 applies to programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title II of the ADA covers all of the services, programs, and activities conducted by public entities (state and local governments, departments, agencies, etc.), including licensing.

Who Is Protected Under Section 504 and the ADA?

Section 504 and the ADA protect *qualified individuals with disabilities*. An *individual with a disability* is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. **Major life activities** means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. Under Section 504 and the ADA, a person is a *qualified individual with a disability* if he or she meets the essential requirements for receipt of services or benefits, or participation in the programs or activities of a covered entity. The question of whether a particular condition is a disability within the meaning of Section 504 and the ADA is determined on a case-by-case basis.

What Is a "Physical or Mental Impairment?"

Physical or mental impairments include, but are not limited to: visual, speech, and hearing impairments; mental retardation, emotional illness, and specific learning disabilities; cerebral palsy; epilepsy; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; orthopedic conditions; cancer; heart disease; diabetes; and contagious and noncontagious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic).

Specific Requirements

Covered entities **must not**:

- Establish eligibility criteria for receipt of services or participation in programs or activities that screen out or tend to screen out individuals with disabilities, unless such criteria are necessary to meet the objectives of the program.
- Provide separate or different benefits, services, or programs to individuals with disabilities, unless it is necessary to ensure that the benefits and services are equally effective.

Covered entities **must**:

- Provide services and programs in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.

- Make reasonable modifications in their policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless it would result in a fundamental alteration in their program or activity.

Ensure that buildings are accessible.

- Provide auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities, at no additional cost, where necessary to ensure effective communication with individuals with hearing, vision, or speech impairments. (Auxiliary aids include such services or devices as: qualified interpreters, assistive listening headsets, television captioning and decoders, telecommunications devices for the deaf [TDDs], videotext displays, readers, taped texts, brailled materials, and large print materials.)

Who May File a Complaint with OCR?

Any individual who believes that he or she or a specific individual or class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, in a health or human service program or activity conducted by a covered entity, may file a complaint with OCR. Complaints must be filed within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination. OCR may extend the 180-day deadline if you can show "good cause." Include the following information in your written complaint, or request a Discrimination Complaint Form from an OCR Regional or Headquarters office (complaints must be signed by the complainant or an authorized representative):

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- Name and address of the entity you believe discriminated against you.
- How, why, and when you believe you were discriminated against.
- Any other relevant information.

Send your complaint to the Regional Manager at the appropriate OCR Regional Office, or to the address located below. Upon receipt, OCR will review the information provided. If we determine we do not have the authority to investigate your complaint, we will, if possible, refer it to an appropriate agency. Complaints alleging employment discrimination on the basis of disability against a single individual may be referred to the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for processing. Private individuals may also bring law suits against a public entity to enforce their rights under Section 504 and the ADA; and may receive injunctive relief, compensatory damages, and reasonable attorney's fees.

For Further Information, Contact:

Director U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights

200 Independence Avenue, SW - Room 506-F

Washington, D.C. 20201

Hotlines: 1-800-368-1019 (Voice) 1-800-537-7697 (TDD)

E-Mail: ocrmail@hhs.gov Website: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr>

DISPARATE IMPACT STATEMENT

The Veterans Treatment Court believes in treating all Veterans equitably and fairly. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or age in the delivery of services.

The Veterans Treatment Court believe that all Veterans Higher Power is respected and complies with the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations guidelines as noted in 28 CFR 38. This program does not discriminate against participants on the basis of religion or religious belief.

DOCUMENTATION

Each organization will maintain its own documentation using the HIPPA, laws, and regulations that guide that organization. The only documentation that the VTC will give to other entities is whether the Veteran successfully graduated or was discharged from the program. The VTC recommends that all organizations provide as little information from the Veteran's participation in the VTC so that a consistent message is sent to the community or other entities requesting information.

DATA REPORTING

All data requests will go through the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will coordinate with the Judge to determine whether the data reporting information request is to be honored or not. The Program Coordinator will maintain all data, data requests, and reports for at least five years for historical reference.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Annually, starting at the official start date of the VTC , the Program Coordinator will present a draft program evaluation to the VTC staff with any specific recommendations in the following areas:

- (a) the need for the program: this is about the ongoing need to the VTC and why the County Commissioners, the Amarillo Community, and the Veteran Community will continue to support this program.
- (b) the design of the program: This is about outlining the design of the program and ensuring that the Policy manual is updated annually.
- (c) the program implementation and service delivery: The Program Manager will track the number of Veterans entering the VTC, the types of services given to each Veteran (ie. Inpatient Treatment, SUD treatment, Mental Health treatment, etc.), and the length of each Veteran's phases; will track any implementation and service delivery changes that would need to be considered for updating during the annual policy review; will track the requirements of grants and any program implementation and service delivery changes needed to accommodate a specific grant.
- (d) the program impact or outcomes: demonstrating the financial impact of the program (number of Veterans that became employed, amount of federal dollars used for therapy, grant money brought into the community), collaboration in the community, specific outcomes such as graduations, discharge, etc.
- (e) program efficiency: demonstrating that program's activities being produced with appropriate use of resources such as budget and staff time – amount of time of the Judge, DA, volunteer staff, etc.

The VTC staff will discuss the evaluation and create a final evaluation of the program which the VTC Judge will sign off on as being the final report. The report will be presented annually to the County Commissioners. This report will be given to the County Commissioners within 60 days of the official start date of the VTC. The Program Manager will keep all copies of these reports as the historical progression of the program.

FEES AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Each Veteran will work with their Trial Defense Counsel on the appropriate Court fees and fines. Some areas of concern will be how much limited income Veterans can pay. For those categories of Veterans the following applies:

- Those Veterans whose sole income is Social Security or VA Service Connection can apply to have their court fees and probation fees waived while in the Veteran Treatment Court.
- If a Veteran is unable to be employed, they may be required do at least 5 hours of community service per week at an agreed upon Veteran Service Organization or Not For Profit Organization unless after working with the VA VJO, their medical or mental health clearly prevents them from this option.
- Veterans who use the Amarillo VA Health Care System lab for their drug screens may be charge to their VA bill if applicable.
- When the Veteran's Probation Officer requires a Drug Screen, then the Veteran may pay the cost for those and other sanctions managed by the Probation Office such as GPS, SCRAM, or Breathalyzer.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ANCILLARY SERVICES

The Program Coordinator will compile a list of community resources and ancillary services that will benefit the Veteran Treatment Court including a list for community service, a listing of potential funding sources, and various treatment options outside of the VHA.

MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

The Program Coordinator will work with the Amarillo VA Health Care System, Texas Panhandle Center, the Veteran Resource Center, Military and Veteran Peer Network, Another Chance House, and other agencies who are actively working with the Veteran Treatment Court to complete a Memorandum of Understandings within the first six months of the VTC. If updates are needed in the future, or there are time limits on the MOU's, then the Program Coordinator will monitor that they are updated or reviewed in a timely manner. The Judge will sign the MOU's for the VTC.

APPENDIX INDEX

NAME	PAGE #
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SANCTION	24
REQUEST FOR PROMOTION TO PHASE II.....	25
REQUEST FOR PROMOTION TO PHASE III.....	26
REQUEST FOR COMMENCEMENT.....	27
CREATING A STRATEGY OR STRATEGIES FOR YOURSELF.....	28
EARLY WARNING SIGNS CHECKLIST.....	29
MANAGING A MENTAL HEALTH AND/OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE RELAPSE.....	30
STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH STRESS AND OTHER DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.....	31
IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION – MY TEAM.....	32

**Veteran Treatment Court
Acknowledgment of Sanction**

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have been issued the following
sanction by the Veterans Treatment Court: _____

Because of the following issue: _____

I am currently in Phase _____. I understand that I will not be eligible to phase up until I have been sanction-free

Phase I – 28 days Phase II – 90 days Phase III – 120 days

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Signature

Printed Name

Program Defense Attorney

Judge Weaver

**Veteran Treatment Court
Request for Promotion to Phase II**

I, _____, having started this program on _____ and started Phase II on _____ hereby request that I be promoted to the next phase of the Veterans Treatment Court. In support of my request, I affirm that I have completed all of the requirements of my current phase as shown below.

Progress Report – Phase I

1. I attended VTAIP court sessions as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

2. I met with my probation officer and VJO as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

3. I am attending the following treatment/counseling programs: _____

4. I attended all treatment and counseling sessions as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

5. I created a VTAIP Supervision Plan and my current goals are:

a. Short term: _____

b. Short term: _____

c. Long term: _____

d. Long term: _____

6. I achieved the following short-term goal: _____

7. I have not missed a drug/alcohol test or had a positive result for 28 days; the dates of any positive or missed tests during this phase are: _____

8. I have received no sanctions in the past 28 days; the dates of any sanctions during this phase are: _____

9. I am currently working/going to school or at: _____

If not, the reason is _____

10. I have paid \$_____ probation fees, fines, court costs.

Participant Signature

Date

Veteran Treatment Court Request for Promotion to Phase III

I, _____, having started this program on _____ and started Phase II on _____ hereby request that I be promoted to the next phase of the Veterans Treatment Court. In support of my request, I affirm that I have completed all of the requirements of my current phase as shown below.

Participant Signature

Date

Progress Report – Phase II

1. I attended VTC court sessions as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

–

2. I met with my probation officer and VJO as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

3. I am attending the following treatment/counseling programs: _____

–

4. I attended all treatment and counseling sessions as directed; if I missed a session, the reason is: _____

–

5. I achieved the following short-term goal: _____

–

6. The progress I made toward a long-term goal is: _____

–

7. I have not missed a drug/alcohol test or had a positive result for 90 days; the dates of any positive or missed tests are: _____

8. I have received no major sanctions for the preceding 90 days; the dates of any sanctions are: _____

9. I am currently working or going to school at: _____ . If not, the reason is: _____

10. I have maintained stable and sober housing. _____

11. I have paid \$ _____ towards my VTC and/or probation fees, fines, court costs.

Veteran Treatment Court Request for Commencement

I, _____, hereby request that I be considered for commencement from the Veterans Treatment Court. In support of my request, I affirm the following are true:

1. I am currently in Phase III of VTC; Phase III start date: _____.
2. I have completed all of the requirements of the Veterans Treatment Court as shown in the attached Phase Promotion Requests;
3. I have submitted all homework assignments, essays, and my aftercare plan, including my safety and/or sobriety plan;
4. I have attended the Veterans Treatment Court as scheduled or needed throughout Phase III;
5. I have been substance and sanction free for the required amount of time;
6. I have paid all fees, fines, community service, classes and court costs in full;
7. I believe I am ready to graduate.

I signed this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Veteran Signature

Printed Name

CREATING A STRATEGY OR STRATEGIES FOR YOURSELF

Your therapist can provide you with various methods or skills to deal with stress, triggers, anger, difficult situations, etc. Discuss those methods with your therapist, journal on them to remember them, and journal on their effectiveness and in what situations.

The following are some strategies that you can explore by yourself and with your therapist to see what works for you and in what situations.

○ ***Individual Plan for Coping with Stress***

Stressful situation that I want to cope with more effectively:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Signs that I am under stress:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My strategies for coping with stress:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

○ **S.M.A.R.T. – Helpful for planning goals**

- Simple / Specific – make the task specific
- Manageable / Measurable – can you manage or measure the task
- Attainable / Achievable – can you achieve the task or is it more wishful thinking
- Reasonable / Realistic/ Relevant – is this a realistic task in your life at this point
- Tangible / Time bound – how much time are you giving it – when is the task done

○ **I.D.E.A.**

- Identify the issue – clearly identify the stressor, trigger, or issue
- Design a strategy – decide on which strategy – thought stopping, journaling, talking, etc
- Execute the strategy – then do that strategy – it is one thing to think it is another to do
- Augment and make changes as needed – if the strategy you started out with does not work, then change it.

○ **R.I.D. – Used when feeling anxious**

- Relax – take a long, slow, deep breath and focus on your muscles relaxing
- Identify the trigger – what sight, smell, sound, taste, or thought made you anxious
- Decide on your response – what behaviors, words, thoughts do you wish to do

○ **P.L.A.N. – Used when recognizing that a situation may be difficult**

- Prepare for the situation
- Let go of your worry
- Accept that you will experience distress yet it is possible to manage your reaction
- Note all of your coping skills and helping resources.

Early Warning Signs Checklist Personalized Worksheet

This checklist contains a list of common early warning signs. Check the signs that you have experienced. If you have a strategy to address it – write it out. If you don't, then write in, "Will talk to counselor" and then make an appointment with the VJO to demonstrate the identified issues are being properly addressed.

<i>Early Warning Signs</i>	<i>I have experienced this early warning sign.</i>	<i>This is my strategy to address it</i>
My mood shifted back and forth.		
My energy level was low.		
I lost interest in the way I looked or dressed.		
I had trouble concentrating or thinking straight.		
I was afraid I was going crazy.		
I felt distant from my family and friends.		
I felt lonely.		
I felt afraid that something bad was about to happen.		
I felt overwhelmed by demands or felt that too much was being asked of me.		
I had trouble sleeping.		
I was worried that I had physical problems.		
I got angry at little things.		
My energy level was high.		
I lost interest in doing things.		
I felt discouraged about the future.		
My thoughts were so fast I couldn't keep up with them.		
I was puzzled or confused about what was going on around me.		
I had the feeling that I didn't fit in.		
I felt that other people had difficulty understanding what I was saying.		
I was bothered by thoughts I couldn't get rid of.		
I felt bored.		
I felt bad for no reason.		
I felt tense and nervous.		
I had trouble sitting still.		
I had to keep moving or pace up and down.		
I felt depressed and worthless.		
I had trouble remembering things.		
I was eating less than usual.		
I heard voices or saw things that others didn't hear or see.		
I thought that people were staring at me or talking about me.		
I had a decreased need for sleep.		
I was more irritable.		
I was overconfident about my abilities.		
I increased my spending or shopping.		
Other:		
Other:		

One way to make sure you have identified all your early warning signs is to talk to people you trust and who know you well.

Managing a Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse Relapse

When the sheet is complete make an appointment with the VJO to demonstrate the identified issues are being properly addressed.

Identify the people you want involved in helping you manage a relapse:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How do you want them involved?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List the things that need to be taken care of by others when you have a relapse:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Person assigned:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Indicate your treatment preferences:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Indicate type of treatment setting you do not want:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Are there any medical problems that your mental health provider should know about?

Strategies To Cope With Stress And Other Difficult Situations

Use this table as a starting point to figure out your best management skills – if you use the strategy, then document how effective it is and when – if it is a new strategy or you wish to learn more, then document that and talk to your therapist.

When the sheet is complete make an appointment with the VJO to demonstrate the identified issues are being properly addressed. These are just suggestions... you can write in your own strategies that work or get a blank table from the VJO.

Strategy	<i>I already use this strategy</i>	<i>I would like to try this strategy or develop it further</i>
Talk to someone about upsetting events.		
Use relaxation techniques.		
Keep my sense of humor (seek out humorous movies, books and people).		
Participate in religion or other forms of spirituality.		
Exercise regularly.		
Write in a journal or diary.		
Listen to music that is relaxing or uplifting.		
Get involved in social and recreational activities.		
Get involved in a hobby or creative activity.		

Important Contact Information – My Team

My Mentor/Sponsor _____

Phone Number _____

My Court Probation Officer _____

Phone Number _____

My VJO: Dorothy (Dorrie) Carskadon Dorothy.Carskadon@va.gov

Phone Number: 806-355-9703 ext. 4463 (This is a private extension, call day or night)

My VTC Program Manager: Denise Hefley

Phone Number 806-349-4875 (Answering machine always on)

My VA Treatment Provider _____

Phone Number _____

My Mental Health Provider _____

Phone Number _____

My Substance Abuse Provider _____

Phone Number _____

My AA/NA Sponsor/Mentor _____

Phone Number _____

My Housing Provider _____

Phone Number _____

My Veteran Resource Center Representative _____

Phone Number _____